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ESSEX COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE REPORT

**DISTRICT ATTORNEY
KEVIN M. BURKE**

DECEMBER 16, 1986



KEVIN M. BURKE
District Attorney

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT
SALEM NEWBURYPORT LAWRENCE

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TAKE BACK THE STREETS

There is no question that the basic responsibility of a District Attorney is to deliver quality trial advocacy for the people of the Commonwealth. Beyond this obligation is the need for the prosecutor to work with the other parts of the criminal justice system to provide more efficient justice.

If the police, prosecutors, court personnel and corrections officials work together in catching and processing criminals, we can make our streets safer and improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods.

With that in mind, I established the District Attorney's Drug Task Force in 1983. I felt that closer cooperation between local police and state police assigned to my office in a street level approach to drug law enforcement would make an immediate impact, not only on drug distribution, but on every crime committed in the neighborhoods.

The relationship between drug use and other crimes is a well-known phenomena. By concentrating on drug enforcement I knew we would have a great impact on crime in general.

I also recognized that traditional undercover methods of enforcement had little long-term affect on the neighborhoods where drugs were being distributed. What was needed was a long-term, visible street enforcement commitment that would send a clear message to pushers that it was no longer business as usual, and that we were determined to take back the streets.

We began this street level approach in Lynn with a dedicated and experienced group of Lynn and State Police, and the results have exceeded our greatest expectations.



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The quality of life in the neighborhoods improved almost immediately, and there was a significant drop in the crime rate. We were assisted in our efforts by local officials and the local press, who worked with us to get the message of this approach to the people.

As a result, we received a tremendous amount of information regarding drug trafficking from citizen contacts. This truly became a community effort.

While continuing our efforts in Lynn, we established in 1984 a larger task force effort in Lawrence. That group faces an even greater challenge. The drug distribution market in Lawrence is more regional in nature, and more difficult to isolate.

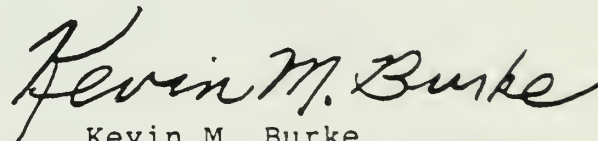
Since the inception of the Lawrence Drug Task Force, we have made hundreds of arrests and seized more than \$5.5 million worth of drugs. Yet, much remains to be done in terms of duplicating the Lynn results.

It appears that the future holds much promise for Lawrence, especially in light of a planned regional drug enforcement program in conjunction with Middlesex County officials.

We have proven with the Essex County District Attorney's Drug Task force that we can improve the quality of life in our communities burdened with drug problems by visible, aggressive street level enforcement.

With our efforts and continued support from the communities of Essex County, we are winning the war on drugs.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin M. Burke". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "K".

Kevin M. Burke
District Attorney

ESSEX COUNTY
DISTRICT ATTORNEY KEVIN M. BURKE'S
DRUG TASK FORCE REPORT

District Attorney Kevin M. Burke's Drug Task Force has swept many of the major drug dealers off the streets of Essex County, and has given the neighborhoods back to law-abiding citizens.

"Our drug task force does the best job of anyone in the state," said Burke, who has the statistics to support his claim.

The drug task force has operated throughout the county, focusing primarily on Lynn and Lawrence, the two known drug centers in this area. And both communities have reaped terrific benefits.

"I think the drug task force has been tremendous," said Lawrence Mayor Kevin Sullivan. "The people out there know that if they deal drugs and continue to break the law, they will be caught. Portions of the city are becoming safer."

When Burke formed his drug task force in 1983, he decided to focus his initial attack on heroin trafficking in Lynn. A subsequent study conducted by the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University labeled the force's first year of operation a "spectacular success."

"I decided to try the street approach in Lynn," said Burke. "The results were excellent."

Heroin dealers who hawked their wares like vendors at a ballgame were arrested en masse, and four of the 13 major heroin dealers in Lynn were deported.

Instead of elaborate undercover operations such as wiretaps and other time-consuming methods, the task force relied on three direct approaches. They included surveillance and questioning of known and suspected drug dealers; the use of low level informants; and the execution of search warrants where probable cause could be established.

Those efforts were supported by a telephone hotline, which allowed citizens to call anonymously to alert police to drug dealing activities. It proved to be a very effective tool. In the past three years, 3,144 people have called police with tips.

Many of those tips led to major arrests.

"The basic target of the drug task force in Lawrence and Lynn is to significantly reduce the amount of drugs sold and spin-off crimes," said Burke. "By direct on-street enforcement, we've made the neighborhoods better places to live."

Studies have proven that drug addicts commit a multitude of crimes to support their habits, including burglaries and armed robberies. Many dealers accept stolen merchandise in exchange for drugs.

So when the task force cut off the free-flowing heroin supply, the city of Lynn saw a staggering drop in crime.

In the one-year period examined by the study (November 1983 - November 1984), burglaries in Lynn fell 41 percent and robberies decreased by 35 percent.

"By making drugs unavailable, we forced addicts to move or seek help," said Burke.

Lynn street corners where dealers and users crowded in broad daylight to conduct their business were soon vacant.

And Project COPE in Lynn reported an 85 percent increase in counseling hours during the task force's first year of operation. Counselors said clients told them there was little available heroin, and they were increasingly afraid of being arrested.

"We make it so hot on the streets that they want to get help," said State Police Lt. James Jajuga, who supervises the drug task force for Burke.

As a result of the task force's tremendous success in Lynn, Burke directed his attention toward Lawrence, at the northern end of the county.

In just two years, the district attorney's drug task force has seized \$5.5 million worth of heroin, cocaine and marijuana in Lawrence, and has made 604 arrests.

Of those, 91 suspects have been indicted by Essex County Grand Juries, meaning their cases were bound over to Superior Court where the potential penalties are much more severe.

"There is still a problem," said Burke, "but for the most part Lt. Jajuga has removed from the streets of Lawrence any significant heroin sales. Most of the major dealers have been caught."

A series of interviews with drug users, being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Mark A.R. Kleiman of BOTEC Analysis Corp. of Cambridge, indicate drugs are more difficult to obtain in Lawrence.

Merchants interviewed also say the streets are cleaner and the quality of life is better since the drug task force went into action.

Despite the impressive statistics compiled by the drug task force, it appears the spin-off crimes associated with drug abuse have not decreased in Lawrence.

There are several reasons for that.

Because of the interstate highway that goes through the city, drugs can easily be obtained out of county or in the greater Lawrence area. Thus, drug users can still commit crimes in Lawrence while buying their drugs elsewhere.

In Lynn, the population is 95 percent white and English speaking. The drug market in that city was run primarily by a small population of Hispanics in a fairly concentrated area.

The city of Lawrence, however, is at least one-third Hispanic, and the drug market there is much more firmly entrenched and widespread. That makes the task of curbing the problem more difficult. But the district attorney is heartened by the fact that Hispanic community leaders are working hard to assist the drug task force.

While it appears spin-off crimes have not decreased, it is difficult to make absolute statistical comparisons because of the incomplete records of the Lawrence Police Department.

In addition, the city's crime figures were distorted by the riots in that community during the summer of 1984.

Dr. Kleiman offered several recommendations to increase the task force's effectiveness in Lawrence. They include:

- Increased manpower. Although the officers assigned to the drug task force are doing an excellent job, additional manpower is needed to have a greater impact on drug trafficking and spin-off crimes.

- An integrated program with neighboring counties.

- The urinalysis program should be implemented and used as an effective tool.

- Lawrence Police and community groups must continue their increased involvement in combating the problem.

- More concentration on heroin.

Treatment facilities such as Beverly's Project RAP, Lynn's Project COPE, and the Greater Lawrence Psychological Center must be available for addicts who want to beat their habits.

Although Burke is disappointed that spin-off crimes haven't decreased, he is pleased with the inroads made by his drug task force thus far. And he anticipates even more success in the future.

"The men are doing an extraordinary job," said the district attorney. "They are the best trained, most highly motivated task force in the state. They have great esprit. They see that people are appreciative of the job they're doing."

The Boston Globe reported in its Nov. 4, 1986 issue that the task force raided the apartment of two suspected drug dealers. When the suspects were handcuffed and led to waiting cruisers, neighbors stood and applauded.

That sort of community support has been consistently evident, according to Burke. And both Lynn and Lawrence have reached into their coffers to help support the drug task force.

Lynn presented Burke with a check for \$54,000 in November to help the task force continue its outstanding work in that community. The City Council approved \$29,000 of that, and the Department of Community Development contributed the other \$25,000.

Lawrence gave Burke \$58,800 so the drug task force can continue making inroads against the problem in that city. Two years ago it gave the task force a vacant fire station (a victim of Proposition 2 1/2) for its headquarters.

Both cities have assigned some of their officers to work exclusively with the drug task force. Those men, said Burke, have been invaluable.

"The drug task force isn't a luxury, it's a necessity," said Mayor Sullivan. "I've been very impressed with the district attorney's office and his drug task force."

"If you don't give someone the right tools to work with, they won't be successful," said Lynn Mayor Albert DiVirgilio. "Rhetoric alone isn't going to solve the problem."

Other cities and towns in the county, impressed with the task force's effectiveness, have sent detectives to train with it. The result has been a solid network of narcotics officers throughout the county.

"The drug task force is intended to be a resource for every police department," said Burke. "This whole high profile approach has reaped tremendous dividends. I'm convinced it's the best use of the drug task force."



CONTRIBUTION TO THE FORCE: Lynn Mayor Albert DiVirgilio (center) presents Essex County District Attorney Kevin M. Burke with a check for \$54,000, which will help Burke's Drug Task Force continue its outstanding efforts in that community. At right is Lynn police Lt. John LeBrasseur, supervisor of Burke's task force in that city.



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: Discussing ways to combat the drug problem are Peabody Police Lt. Gerald Bellew, Peabody Mayor Peter Torigian, District Attorney Kevin M. Burke and Peabody Police Chief Joseph Donlon.



EDUCATION IS THE KEY: Burke employs not only the best drug task force in the state, but supports educational measures to teach students to "Say No" to drugs. From left are Haverhill Mayor William Ryan, District Attorney Burke, the Haverhill High School Student Council, and Haverhill High School Principal Michael Wrenn.

LAWRENCE DRUG TASK FORCE STATISTICS, July, 1984 - October, 1986.

ARRESTS.....	634
SEARCH WARRANTS SERVED.....	237
HOTLINE CALLS RECEIVED.....	2,864
LETTERS TO P.O. BOX.....	403
CARS SEIZED.....	6
HANDGUNS SEIZED.....	21
RIFLES SEIZED.....	6

VALUE OF DRUGS SEIZED:

HEROIN.....	\$2,303,076.00
COCAINE.....	\$3,106,075.00
MARIJUANA.....	\$85,635.00

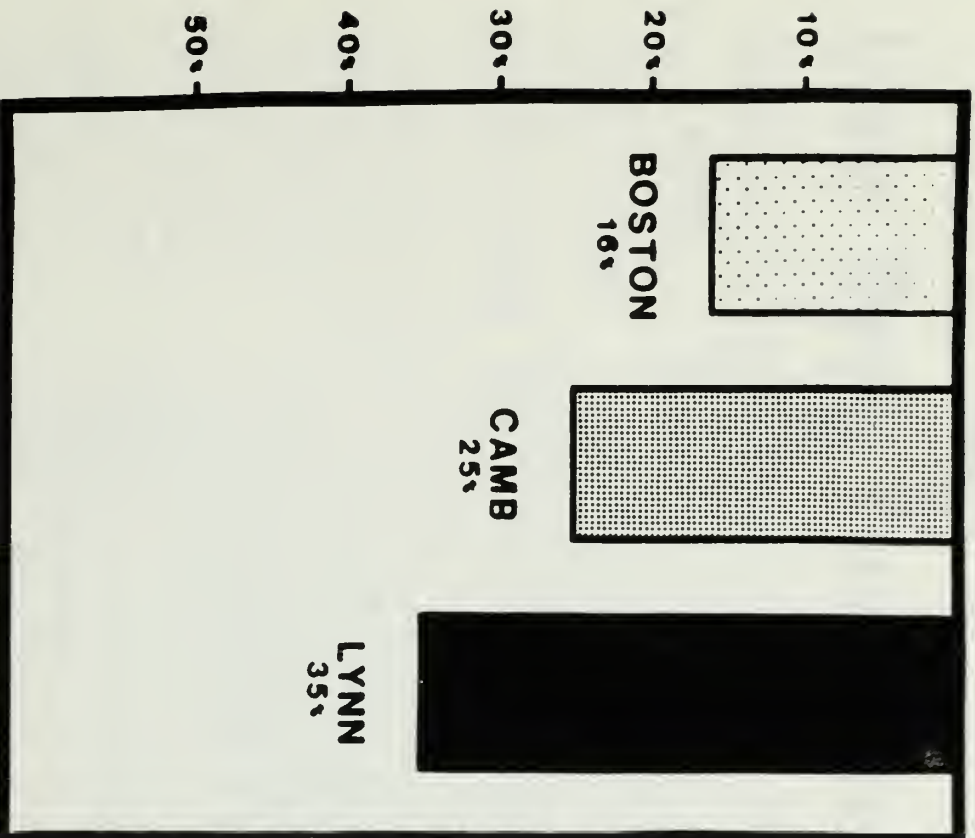
LYNN DRUG TASK FORCE STATISTICS, SEPTEMBER, 1983 - OCTOBER, 1986.

ARRESTS.....	604
SEARCH WARRANTS SERVED.....	144
HOTLINE CALLS RECEIVED.....	3,144
INDICTMENTS.....	91
HANDGUNS SEIZED.....	25
WEAPONS SEIZED.....	4
CASH SEIZED.....	\$175,545.00
CARS SEIZED.....	2

VALUE OF DRUGS SEIZED:

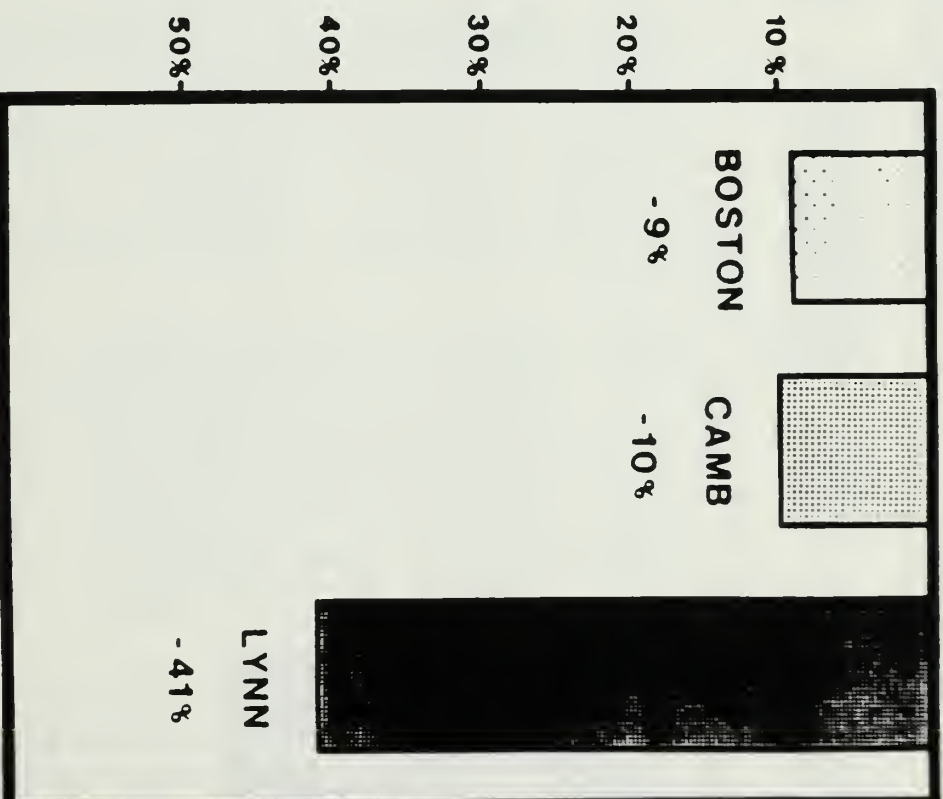
HEROIN.....	\$698,550.00
COCAINE.....	\$698,900.00
MARIJUANA.....	\$34,280.00
SPEED.....	\$1,290.00

TASK FORCE REDUCED ROBBERIES IN LYNN



DECREASE IN ROBBERIES
11/83-6/84 VS 11/82-6/83

TASK FORCE REDUCED BURGLARIES IN LYNN



DECREASE IN BURGLARIES
11/83-6/84 VS 11/82-6/83

City/Suburban

Lynn Drug Task Force is cleaning the streets Undercover operation has led to 600 arrests, \$1.4 million seized in three years

By DAVID LISCIO
Item Staff

LYNN — The Lynn Drug Task Force has arrested more than 600 suspects and seized an estimated \$1.4 million worth of illegal substances since it hit the streets three years ago.

In its latest effort to stem the flow of drugs, undercover cops with cameras last month began videotaping high school students smoking dope on school grounds.

Run under the auspices of the Essex County District Attorney's office, the task force was begun as an experimental program to combat rampant drug activity on city streets. The task force was so successful in reducing burglaries and robberies that it became the focus of a Harvard University law enforcement study. Many of the city's drug addicts moved elsewhere after Lynn's seemingly endless supply of heroin was dramatically decreased.

The task force is comprised of three state troopers and three Lynn police officers, under the command of Lt. John LeBrasseur.

"We have the best trained, most highly motivated task force in the state," District Attorney Kevin M. Burke said this week after releasing

the latest figures. "By direct on-street enforcement, we've made the neighborhoods a better place to live."

The task force has a 90 percent conviction rate, LeBrasseur said. While emphasis will remain focused on busting street dealers and enclaves of drug activity, the task force is working to stem the flow of drug sales at the city's three high schools.

Since school began in September, task force members have

videotaped illegal drug use at Lynn Tech, and at English and Classical High, according to LeBrasseur.

"The School Department is looking for dealers," he said. "If we catch kids on tape we report them to school officials."

LeBrasseur said the Police Department already has on film high school students smoking marijuana. He warned that locker searches will become more frequent.

"The only way we'll be suc-

cessful in combating drugs is with a total community effort," said Mayor Albert DiVirgilio, adding that success depends on the cooperation of parents, teachers and students. "We're winning the war against drugs because we're paying attention to it."

Earlier this week, LeBrasseur told a group of English High students that his men frequently work undetected. He joked that despite popular belief, undercover cops "do not only drive four-door Fords with blackwall tires and those little antennae sticking up from the trunk."

When such a vehicle does drive past a Lynn high school, he said "some wise kid who gets all As, no doubt, will yell something like, 'Hey narc.' But the lieutenant said those days are over. "Today we drive Corvettes, Volkswagens, Rabbits, vans, small cars. We could be in anything and you won't know it."

Asked about how it feels to search someone's home, LeBrasseur said it's never enjoyable. "I don't ever like searching a home and going through somebody's bureau drawers, through their private things," he said. "But most of all, the reason I don't like it is that I've violated somebody's

privacy if I don't do it right."

How many times has he searched a home and come up empty handed? "Once or twice," he said.

Did he apologize? "I can tell you candidly, no." In order for a search warrant to be issued, LeBrasseur said the courts must first be shown evidence and convinced that drugs will likely be found at the address. "We just don't open the phone book in the morning and pick a place to search."

To help Burke's task force, DiVirgilio said the City Council is expected to sanction a move that would give \$54,000 in city funds to the drug unit. "If you don't give someone the right tools to work with, they won't be successful," said the mayor. "Rhetoric alone isn't going to solve the problem."

At least \$29,000 is expected to be drawn from the city's supplemental budget, with the remaining \$25,000 coming from the Department of Community Development, according to Jeff Hayward, the mayor's chief of staff.

Hayward said the transfer of funds is still being arranged. The amount given by the Department of Community Development is a marked increase over past contributions of less than \$8,000, he said.

In Force: the results

The Lynn Drug Task Force went into operation in September 1983 to combat rampant drug activity on the city's streets. As of Oct. 31, its officers had made more than 600 arrests and seized more than \$1 million in illegal substances.

The following statistics were released this week by Essex County District Attorney Kevin M. Burke:

Search warrants served	144
Arrests	604
Cash seized	\$174,545.
Handguns seized	25
Indictments	91
Drug Hot-line calls	3,144
Street value of cocaine seized	\$698,900.
Street value of heroin seized	\$698,550.
Street value of marijuana seized	\$14,280.



"We have the best trained, most highly motivated task force in the state ... we've made the neighborhoods a better place to live."

—District Attorney
Kevin M. Burke

Police Grab Kilo of Cocaine

LAWRENCE (AP) — A drug bust that netted police a kilo of cocaine from a trash pile has pinched the drug supply in Lawrence and was a coup for a combined state, local and federal task force, an official said yesterday.

"Any time you get a kilo or more of coke, it's not just another bust," said Essex County District Attorney Kevin Burke. "We believe the individuals involved were major suppliers to the greater Lawrence area."

Lawrence Detective Jack DeSantis led the Essex County Drug Task Force to a rubbish pile outside the rear of a building on West Dalton Street, where they arrested Victor

The men were arrested on federal drug charges during what police said was a raid of a kilo of cocaine to an undercover federal agent's surveillance filming.

The men were arrested on federal drug charges during what police said was a raid of a kilo of cocaine to an undercover federal agent's surveillance filming.

Drug Task Force keeps up the roll

Latest bust on Rockaway Street pleases chief

By DAVID LISIO
Item Staff

LYNN — Police netted an estimated \$150,000 in cocaine during a Rockaway Street bust Thursday by the Lynn Drug Task Force in the past eight days to \$341,000.

Daniel F. Valdez, 27, 68 Rockaway St., was to be arraigned in District Court this morning for one count of major drug trafficking, a crime that carries with it a mandatory 10-year jail term.

Valdez allegedly was caught in his second-story rooming house, found in a briefcase by Lt. John...

Assisting LeBrasseur were Lynn Inspector Kenneth Avery, State Troopers Brian Lilly, Greg Derr and Thomas Walsh, all assigned to the task force.

In the wake of the latest acting Police Chief Ric Courtney said he was "tickled" with the work these guys are doing.

Thursday's raid marked the fourth major seizure by the force since July 24, when Chelsea police nabbed an alleged drug dealer with 265 bags of heroin.

The bags cost \$100,000 and were being transported to LeBrasseur's office.

Danvers drug bust nets cocaine worth \$150,000

DANVERS — Calling it one of the largest drug busts ever on the North Shore, a combined state and local police force netted more than \$150,000 worth of cocaine in the arrest of a 31-year-old Danvers man on drug trafficking charges.

Richard B. Wundar, 31, of 69 Wedgemere Ave., Winchester, on charges of possession of a Class B Substance (cocaine) with intent to distribute and major trafficking.

Danvers police were assisted by state police Cpl. Paul Regan and Cpl. John Walch of Essex County District Attorney Kevin M. Burke's Anti-Drug Force.

"This is definitely one of the largest seizures we've ever had on the North Shore. Over 100 pounds of pure cocaine, street value of \$170,000 means this is a major trafficker," said...

Following more than a month of undercover investigation, the bust took place last night in a parking lot off of Route 114, where police had tipped off a shipment of pure cocaine was being moved from Florida for distribution to the northern New England states.

Det. M. Chase and Det. Christopher Kerans arrested...

4 arrested in drug raid

HAVERHILL — Four persons were arrested in a raid by the Essex County Drug Task Force at 11:50 p.m. Thursday at 8 Cedar St.

Haverhill Narcotics Det. Michael A. Spero said approximately an ounce of cocaine was seized, along with \$3,000 in cash.

Arrested were Betty J. Allen, 19, of 8 Cedar St., charged with possession of cocaine with intent to distribute and major trafficking in drugs; Tan Van Nguyen, 23, of 8 Cedar St., charged with possession of a Class B controlled substance and major drug trafficking; Tan Hug Nguyen, 26, 8...

Cedar St., charged with possession of cocaine, drug and major trafficking. Harry J. Allen, 21, was arrested at the same address in Haverhill.

Drug Task Force: Keep up good work

SUMMARY: Lawrence Drug Task Force deserves more money.

IF ANYTHING DESERVES a contribution from Lawrence, the Drug Task Force does.

In just one year, the unit arrested 328 people and seized nearly \$4 million in drugs. It received great support from city residents, too, getting 1,544 hotline tips and 256 letters.

District Attorney Kevin Burke called the task force the finest example of local and regional law enforcement cooperation in the state.

But it needs \$58,800 from the city to carry on. The City Council is set to vote on the proposal next week.

It would be money well-spent. We hope the council agrees.

Three taken in heroin bust

By JACK BUTTERWORTH
Item Staff

LYNN — A man described as a main drug supplier for Chelsea and his two companions were scheduled to be arraigned on drug and gun charges today following a Lynn

Drug Task Force raid in the Broad Street area.

Alberto Nieves, 30, and Louis A. Rosario, 25, both of 23 Breed St., and Margarita Vera, 26, 82 Chestnut St., were charged with possession of heroin with intent to sell, possession

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**NO
DRUGS
DA
KEVIN BURKE**